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DEFENCE

OF

WARNER MIFFLIN

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DEFENCE.

I WAS born and chiefly raised on the Eastern Shore of Virginia; and although my Parents were of the religious Society called Quakers, and exemplary in their Lives, yet I witnessed great incitements to a departure from the principles held by that People, there being none of the Profession, except our Family within sixty Miles; and my Associates were of those, who tenaciously held the prevailing sentiments in favour of Slavery: So that I had no opportunity of having my heart and views enlarged on this interesting Subject, by conversing with such of my Brethren in Profession, who had come to see the necessity of an impartial enquiry into the nature and tendency of this atrocious practice.

Thus situated and my Father then possessing a number of Slaves, I was in great danger of becoming blinded by the influence of Custom, the

the bias of Education, and the delusions of self-interest ; from whence I certainly must have become fettered as in the Chains of wrong habits, had not the emanations of divine Light and Grace (which I had been early instructed to pay attention to) powerfully prevailed in successive visitations, so operating as to subvert the effects of dangerous prepossessions, and disposing my mind to yield to the influences of best wisdom, on this, to my present view, one of the worst of sins.

And it is with peculiar satisfaction I have to remark, that my Father was not long behind me in espousing the cause of Liberty: After sealing the sincerity of his professions by the liberation of about an hundred Blacks, notwithstanding the discouragement of a Law then existing, he became a zealous Advocate and intercessor for them with their Masters, and in many instances were his labours successful: Often appearing alone in Courts of Law, amidst surrounding Opponents, to plead the Cause of Individuals of the African Race, who had a claim to freedom.

An occurrence took place about the fourteenth year of my Age, that tended to pave the way for the reception of those impressions which have since been sealed with indelible clearness on my understanding. Being in the Field with my Father's Slaves, a young Man among them questioned me "*Whether I thought it could be right, that they should be toiling to raise me, and I sent to school, and by and by their children must do so for mine also?*" Some little irritation took place in my mind at first ; but his reasoning finally so impressed me as never to be erased

erased—The idea of losing so much property as what I might probably expect from the great number my Father possessed, seemed hard on first view to reconcile; however, before I arrived at Manhood I determined never to be a Slave holder—Yet on settling in a Married life, commenced the proving of my Faith on this head—I became possessed of several Minor Slaves by my Wife and divers came from my Fathers on different errands, with a conclusion to abide with me, without any move thereto on his part or mine: As also several that never lived with him, that were of my Mothers family of Blacks from Kent County Maryland—Thus all I then had of lawful Age, being Volunteers, I sat down quiet in the use of them, until at length I became almost persuaded I could not do without them—And when the subject of freeing Blacks was treated on, the prevailing sentiment was, that Negroes were such Thieves they would not do to be free; and though this was chiefly the plea of Slave holders, yet I was glad to embrace it as a pretext for keeping mine, but I was not suffered long to rest unreprieved in this spot; my fig leaf covering of excuse was stripped off and my state discovered to me by the penetrating Rays of that Light which maketh manifest “*for whatsoever maketh manifest is light;*” from whence considerable conflict arose in my soul; when after continuing for some time debating, resolving and re-resolving, a period arrived, when he who hath his way in the Clouds, in the Whirlwind, the Earthquake, and thick darkness, was pleased to arouse me to greater vigilance by his terrors for Sin, for having omitted what had appeared clearly as my duty

duty in this business, when in a time of thunder storm, every flash appeared as though it might be the instrument to dispatch me into a state of fixedness, and with the measure of my duty herein not filled up; what then could I expect if taken in that condition, but an eternal separation from heavenly enjoyment? And though these sensations may appear strange to some, who *neither fear God nor regard Man* yet I still retain a willingness, that such seasons of convulsion in the outward Elements, may be impressive of solid instruction to my mind.

It then settled on my understanding, that I should indeed be excluded from happiness if I continued in this breach of the divine Law, written upon my heart as by the finger of Heaven; altho' want and disgrace to my family had presented with threatening aspect, should I adhere to its dictates. After which, in the Year 1774, I manumitted those I had by my Wife, flattering myself such who came of their own accord I might retain while they chose to continue as heretofore, 'till being visited with affliction, on the presentation of an awful Eternity, a willingness was wrought in me to cast my care on a merciful Providence, and to resign up at all events to what I did believe was called for at my hands, that of bearing a faithful Testimony against the abominable practice of enslaving fellow Men, I therefore let my Father know, he must take the Blacks away or authorize me to set them free: He readily told me I might do as I would, on which in 1775 I executed another deed of Emancipation for all I held as mine.—

About the 24th year of my Age I was put into the Commission of the Peace, which tended

to excite considerable thirst for preferment in Government, a taste that had much impeded the progress of my Testimony against Slavery, as it furnished an Idea of additional necessity for Slaves to support me in that mode of Life. Yet after those seasons of conflict before hinted at, I became impressed with a belief that it was right for me to decline this Office, and with it any future advancement to stations in Power.—Altho' I revere Magistracy, confiding in the Sacred Text, that it is an *Ordinance of God*, and believing it a great benefit to mankind when executed under his holy and preserving fear—But in the present state of Governments, I apprehend my Brethren cannot be active therein consistent with our high profession, of being called to become, thro' a faithful adherence to divine monitions, even as some of the first fruits of the Nations unto God, in the support of our principle against War, with which the various Governments, among Men have so much affinity—I was solemnly impressed with the importance of the trust when about undertaking the Commission, and resolved to discharge my duty therein fully; yet tho' I endeavoured to perform this to the best of my understanding, I never felt that peace of Soul I desired, during my continuance in Office, this brought me into a strict scrutiny, and a confirmation succeeded of the Truth of our great Masters declaration “*My Kingdom is not of this World.*” My mind hath remained, stedfastly attached to these sentiments, when at different times since I have been solicited to accept of any station either in the Legislative or Executive departments of Government, especially as it considerably unfits for the promulgation of peace
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and good will among Men, when there is an embarkation in human policy, on its floating Sea of party Spirit; that gendereth envy, malice, revenge, rents, divisions and War—And the abundant use of Oaths, with frequent perjuries, in what relates to matters of Government, appears to me not only a manifest violation of Christs injunction to his followers “ *Swear not at all,*” as what exceedeth the simple and plain communication of “ *Yea yea, and nay, nay, cometh of evil*” but is also a profanation of the Sacred Name.

And indeed I have felt scrupulous of taking an active part at Elections, least I should not only become tinged with a Spirit of party, but also contribute by my Vote to the placing those in power who might become oppressors of tender Consciences. If we give no just occasion of offence, but are in other respects useful Members of the Community, we may be admitted without censure to the exercise of these scruples; and it would be more to the honour as well as blessing of the World, if the tender Conscience was more cherished.

To resume the thread of my Narrative—I was concerned with two Estates, to which belonged many of the African Race; in one they were willed to the Heirs particularly named, and as Executor I conceived I must exercise the government over them, to enable me to settle with the Heirs. But I was turned solidly to consider, that I should not be justified in doing that for another, which I was fully convinced was a sin to do on my own account—The prospect being clear, a solemn impression took place at the time, that I believed to be the language

guage of holy certainty, *That neither I nor mine should ever suffer by my discharging them;* which I believe was never doubted by me. I called them in and let them know, so far as I had power they were free; some who were hired by their own consent, I informed they must continue the time out and they should have their Wages, and likewise all their earnings from their Masters death; which was fully complied with on my part to the best of my knowledge, and according to my faith so was the event, the several Heirs as they arrived at age, liberated the Slaves and released me.

I also found an engagement to make restitution to those I had held in a State of bondage, for the time so held, which was done according to the judgment of indifferent Men, agreed on by myself and the blacks. And on reflection I found I had so much hand in selling some, as to put me under an obligation to release them; which I did to a considerable amount, on my own account, my then Wife's, and some who belonged to her Father and Grandfather.—

About this time I was appointed on a Committee to labour with the members of our Society who held Slaves, in order for the conviction of their understandings, of the inconsistency of this practice with Christianity; which labour was so far blest that in a little time most of our Members liberated theirs.—Now great stir was made as if the Country was going to be overturned and ruined. It appeared as if the Lying Spirit had gone forth to deceive the People—On my setting mine free, I thought it best to put them from me, to manifest they were so, it was circulated that Misslin had set free a
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parcel of lazy worthless Negroes; he could make nothing by them, therefore set them at liberty. This reflection had some weight with me, however unjust, and regarding Scripture injunction, not to let *our good be evil spoken of*, I thought it expedient to propose their having Land and Teams, and in return they should give me half their produce, which was put in execution with those who chose to accept the Terms. Immediately the tune was turned, that Misslin was making more Money by his Negroes now than ever, and keeping them in more abject Slavery, under the pretence of their being free. I then determined to do what I did believe to be right, not regarding the unbridled Tongues of Men, and so I have endeavoured to act 'till this time, pressing through both good and evil report.

Another trial occurred, I felt religiously engaged in Testimony against the pernicious use of ardent Spirits, so generally prevalent, particularly in time of Harvest—We had been in the superfluous use of it in my family, and laying myself out as a candidate for promotion in Government as before hinted, when in the Commission of the Peace, I frequently kept the Bottle and Bowl on the Table from Morning 'till Night; it being then, and I fear is yet too much, the corrupt manner by which worldly promotion is commonly attained: I now found a sore conflict was to be experienced, in attempting a practice so reverse to what I had been in, and in which I should stand alone. And having discharged my Slaves, I feared I might never be able to save my Grain or carry on my farm to support my family, but the conviction of its rectitude was such, that I felt impelled to make the attempt, I had
a number

a number of People in my field, a Master Mason with divers of his hands, among others, I thought if he became reconciled it would tend to settle the minds of his Companions, therefore began to discourse with him while he was reaping; when in a most shocking manner he damned religion and said he would have Rum; this so affected me, I left the field, apprehending I should never be able to stem such a torrent; but seriously pondering on it, and the subject enlarging in my view with increasing weight, it sealed on my Spirit, that if I should hand out this Liquor, and any Life by its means be lost, as I had several times seen a danger of being the case, I should not be clear of the blood of such, on which I determined thro' divine assistance never to use it again on any like occasions, and with thankfulness I may acknowledge I have been favoured never to suffer damage thro' the misuse of it in my fields, and so preserved from the misapplication of it since, that in all my concerns there has not been one pint used, except on particular Occasions as Medicine, and that but little.

The late Revolution now began to make its appearance and as I was religiously restrained from taking any part therein, I had the epithet of Toryism placed on me by interested holders of Slaves, insinuations were thrown out that my labouring for the freedom of the blacks, was in order to attach them to the British interest, notwithstanding I had liberated mine on the ground of religious conviction, before this revolutionary period arrived—Added to this, on the issue of the Bills of Credit by Congress, I felt restricted from receiving them, lest I might thereby, in some sort defile my hands with one of
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the Engines of War; from whence I was further dipped into sympathy with the condition of the blacks, in acting so as to be declared an Enemy to my Country, and like them, thrown out from the benefit of its Laws, and this for no other Crime, but yielding to the impulses of divine Grace or Law of God written in my heart, which I ever found the safest ground to move upon—Abundant threats were poured out, that my house should be pulled down over my head, that I should be Shot, Carted &c; this proved a fiery tryal, my soul was almost overwhelmed lest I should bring my family to want, and it might be through a deception. I left my house in the night season and walked into a field in the bitterness of my soul, and without any sensible relief returned back, on stepping into the door I espied a Testament, and opening it in the 13th Chap. of Revelations, found mention there made of a time, when none should buy or sell, but those who received the mark of the Beast in the right Hand or forehead: and it fixed in my mind, that if I took that Money after those impressions, I should receive a mark of the bestial spirit of War in my right hand; and then the penalty which is annexed in the ensuing Chapter must follow—I then resolved through the Lords assistance, which I craved might be afforded, let what would follow, never to deal in any of it, this afforded me some relief, and finding my Wife so far united with me as to refuse it likewise (saying though she did not feel the matter as I did, yet through fear of weakening my hands, she was most easy not to touch it) I became much strengthened and resigned to suffer what might be allotted, feeling at times the prevalence
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of that power, which delivers from all fear of the malice of Men or infernal spirits, and reduces the soul into perfect subjection to the holy will and ordering.

Light seems to be increasingly spreading on this subject, or at least more are disposed to yield to its emanations thereon than heretofore; an instance of which is a pamphlet written by a Clergyman in England and lately reprinted by D. Humphreys, in Philadelphia which I would recommend to the perusal of my Readers, in which he remarks, ‘ Such is the dread of singularity in dissenting from opinions sanctioned by public approbation and applause, that but few have courage to forsake the beaten track and think for themselves, in matters confessedly of the highest importance: And thus the specious reasonings and conclusions of men, who have no better claim to infallibility than ourselves, are suffered to divert us from a simple attention to the example and unambiguous precepts of him, who has presented to us, in his own sacred person, celestial excellence, and the most complete pattern of all moral virtue—On subjects which do not relate to the great truths of Religion, we may be indifferent, and it is doubtless, best not to be earnest and tenacious for either side of the Question; but when doctrines, upon the establishment and promulgation of which, the temporal and perhaps the eternal welfare of Millions in some measure depends, it is the duty and interest of every one to search for Truth as for hid treasure; to be fully persuaded in his own Mind, that his principles are founded in immutable truth and unerring rectitude—Let such then unfold the sacred volume, which contains the charter

' of our eternal salvation, and say in what part
 ' of it they can find any passage that will either
 ' directly or indirectly, prove war to be justifi-
 ' able on Christian principles—That will furnish
 ' one argument in favour of a Christians endea-
 ' vouring to injure his fellow Creature, even his
 ' most bitter and inveterate enemy, so much as
 ' in thought; or what is more; that can justify
 ' him in dislodging a human Soul from its ap-
 ' pointed tabernacle, by destroying that life
 ' which he neither gave nor can restore? do
 ' not the doctrines of the new Testament uni-
 ' formly declare against it, and most expressly
 ' and unequivocally prove that War is directly
 ' opposed to the very aim and end of Christiani-
 ' ty, which offers reconciliation to the greatest of-
 ' fenders, and makes our acceptance with God
 ' absolutely to depend on our forgiveness of
 ' those by whom we ourselves have been in-
 ' jured?'—

' Suicide, that lifts his guilty arm against his
 ' own sacred person, naturally excites such hor-
 ' ror in the mind, that he who has impiously
 ' dared to infringe upon the prerogative of his
 ' Maker, by putting a period to his own life, is
 ' held to be unworthy the common rites of
 ' sepulture—The Laws of this Country rank
 ' duellists and their seconds in the class of mur-
 ' derers, since they impiously wanton with their
 ' own lives and those of their fellow Creatures
 ' (see Blackstones Commentaries). the gratificati-
 ' on of revenge, the darling passion of narrow,
 ' savage, and untutored minds, may, perhaps,
 ' be pleaded by some, as an excuse for the
 ' encounters of these gentlemen-like murder-
 ' ers:—But what can be said in extenuation of
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‘ the guilt of those who set others on to War,
 ‘ who never saw each others faces, nor ever had
 ‘ any possible occasion for hatred or animosity?
 ‘ Who can say that such are more innocent
 ‘ than the duelist and suicide, or less deserving
 ‘ the punishment due to such heinous offences
 ‘ against the divine Law, &c.’

The War advancing with increasing distress,
 gloomy prospects opened, and close provings
 seemed at the door of such who were measurably
 redeemed from the spirit of party. Not only
 our Testimony against War, in the support of
 which our religious Society have been oft brought
 under tryals; but that against pulling down or
 setting up of Governments was brought to the
 Test. As there are those, who from full expe-
 rience know, that it is not a cunningly devised
 Fable, but the Truth of God revealed in the
 heart, through his Light and good Spirit, that
 shews us we are called to raise the pure Stand-
 ard of the Prince of Peace, above all party rage,
 strife, contention, rents and divisions, in the
 spirit of meekness and wisdom; and in quiet-
 ness and confidence, patiently to suffer what
 may arise for the promotion of this peaceable
 Government of the Shiloh; in and through an
 innocent life and conversation; wherein the
 language is felt of ‘ *Glory to God in the high-
 est, on Earth peace and good will to Men:*’
 And this was the experience of many, I am
 bold to assert it, even during the late cruel War,
 when thousands of Men were endeavouring in
 its fierce and voracious spirit to destroy one
 another—Such have been my own sensations,
 when at one view I have beheld both parties,
 and had to risk a passage through them—I count-
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ed none my enemy, I felt no fear from any thing on my part in thought, word, or deed; many times concluding, I should have had no objection for the two contending Generals to have known my whole heart and conduct, having at an early period of that Calamity been convinced, it would not do for me, even in idea, to wander without the boundaries of my professed principles; or I could not expect to be sustained by the secret aid of the God of the faithful, whose everlasting Arm of help, with humble gratitude I may acknowledge, hath been stretched out for my strengthening and confirmation in a variety of instances: One of which was, when called upon among others for the support of *Truth*, to appear before the Assembly of Pennsylvania, on behalf of our Friends who were banished from Philadelphia to Virginia, for the well known forgery and unjust charge on our Society, dated from Spank Town, respecting which, some yet undertake to vilify us, though it hath been so fully refuted and cleared up. After which occurrence, I queried with an American Officer of high rank, whether he did believe that could have been wrote in any of our Meetings? to which he replied, ‘ He believed it was wrote in ‘ a Meeting House’—I told him it would be hard for us to be answerable for all the crimes committed in our Meeting Houses, when they chose to take them from us by force, but did he believe it was wrote by any of the Society? his answer was ‘ He believed Gen. Sullivan knew who wrote it’—And when on the day of the battle of Germantown, our Yearly Meeting issued a Testimony respecting our peaceable principles, denying said charge I was one among others, appointed

pointed to present this to the Commander in Chief of each Army, which was a proving time; to pass through opposing Armies, most of whose minds were perhaps agitated, and many of them afresh fired by the Spirit of War, from their recent engagement; and with no passport or shield to protect us from any merciless attack, but our own innocence sheltered by the wing of divine preservation: Herein I was brought into renewed sympathy with our oppressed African Brethren, who are many of them exposed to the uncontrouled power of Man, without any tribunal on all the Earth whereunto they can appeal for redress of grievances.—

After many similar exercises, with frequent calls for, but little seizure of my property, 'till the close of the War (when great spoil was made), through a steady perseverance things began to wear a different aspect, hard speeches, frowns and threats gradually abated so that through the whole I had not an insult offered to me in Person.

Congress having published a declaration, that they 'hold these Truths to be self evident. 'That all Men are created equal; that they are 'endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, Governments are instituted 'among Men.' Seeing it was the very substance of the doctrine I had been concerned to promulgate for years, I became animated with a hope, that if this was sincere in the Representatives, and by them inculcated among the People generally; a blessing to this Nation would accompany those endeavours. To serve my Country by ex-

ertions to remove one cause of impending Judgments, I was concerned to unite with my Brethren in representing this matter to different Legislative bodies—In the Year 1782 we appeared before the Assembly of Virginia; which was attended with great satisfaction, having a set of Liberal spirited Members to deal with, when a Law took place admitting of emancipation; to which Law Judge Tucker says in his late publication, may be attributed the liberation of some thousands of blacks—In 1783 we presented a Memorial to Congress respecting the Slave Trade and met with encouragement. And afterwards in the Assemblies of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware, some important steps were taken. Also in our after application to Congress it was evident, that a large part of that Body were favourably disposed towards the rights of this People. From these encouraging circumstances I was induced to hope that Divine favour might yet be continued to this Land; though often impressed with fears, that our progress in this business was not proportionably great to the light that had arisen—And indeed it is a mournful consideration, that this Nation should yet be stained with the blood of the African Trade; and that 700,000 Slaves, according to latter calculation, should continue to groan in a Land of boasted Liberty. My heart has been grieved and soul lamented for this afflicted Race, as well as the condition of my Country; having oft felt as I did at the beginning of the Revolution, apprehensive, the hand of Judgment was ready to be opened and outstretched upon a guilty People, if there was not greater reformation in this point, so as to appease offended Justice;

stice ; as the outrages committed therein against humanity, I consider as alone sufficient to draw down sovereign indignation, exclusive of those other evils and vices too prevalent in the Land.

An occurrence took place which produced renewed exercise of mind, and in the hour of affliction sealed further instruction on this object. I received a severe hurt on my Leg, and whilst under extreme anguish in dressing it, was brought into Sympathy with a poor Soldier, whose Leg being fractured and he left without help in the field of Battle. The sensation was so powerful, I told my Wife, that ever since arriving to years capable of judging, I had a Testimony against War, but never so powerfully as at that time; feeling so, that if every farthing we were possessed of, was seized for the purpose of supporting War, and I was informed it should all go, except I gave voluntarily one shilling, that I was satisfied I should not so redeem it.

Shortly after which, an account arrived that a Vessel from the West Indies was run a shore at Lewis Town by the English, and the Militia were called upon to keep them from plundering her, on which this clear presentation took place—Here is the Channel through which in a Time of national Hostility those sweets I am so fond of come; at a manifest risk of the lives of fellow Men. I remember powerfully what were Davids sensations when his valiant Men rushed through the Philistine Army to bring him Water from a Well which he longed for; he was struck with sympathy for their situation; and because they went in *Jeopardy of their Lives*, was not easy to gratify his palate therewith, but poured it out in dedication to the Lord. In like manner I felt
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a prohibition from using Foreign imports, and during the continuance of the War, never touched therewith, except what seasoning of Salt might have been in my food when from home—And being brought into a deep feeling for the oppressions of the poor Africans in the West Indies; have never been easy with indulging in the produce of their Labours since; least it should even in a small degree contribute towards the continued existence of a Trade, which interests the Planters in keeping up the number of their groaning labourers.

And fully believing that ‘Righteousness exalteth a Nation, but Sin is a shame to any People,’ I am anxiously desirous we may be numbered with the wise promoters of the Public good. And indeed I am persuaded, that the growing Sins of America, if persisted in, will be finally attended with dreadful consequences, according to the Testimony of the sacred Records, that, ‘Verily there is a reward for the righteous,’ ‘verily there is a God that judgeth in the Earth;’ and in the due exercise of his Judgment, taking cognizance of the actions of Men, he will assuredly recompence to all according to the fruit of their doings, to Nations as well as to individuals, let the Sophist speculate as he will about sacred things, in that wisdom which *darkens counsel by words without (true) knowledge.*

It is from a sense of duty both to myself and Country that I make these observations, and state some things interesting to both. It was on this ground I became engaged with others, to urge the subject of our concern to different Legislatures; to remove legislative obstacles from those disposed to liberate their Slaves, and to protect those

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those set free. And though salutary Laws have been enacted in some States, for which I believe a blessing will or doth descend upon them, yet still the evil is continued in other parts of America in a most glaring degree: Where conscientious persons are discouraged from Liberating, as by existing Laws the blacks are liable afresh to be taken into Captivity, by a dissolute People disposed to avail themselves of unrighteous Laws; in many instances great numbers have been cruelly seized and sold into renewed bondage—Doth not this excite a fearful apprehension that the measure of their iniquity is filling up, who so act, and that they are ripening for that chastisement which shall be poured forth on the workers of iniquity? and is not the consideration of it a loud call on that state where such evils prevail, to arouse, and by a more righteous procedure endeavour if possible, to avert the impending stroke? and what may be expected both in that and other States, where there is an increase of cruel and barbarous separation suffered between the nearest Connections in life for gain, even where they have had magnanimity enough to give some check to the African Trade! an additional Enormity prevailing, is the frequent kidnapping of free blacks, carrying them off and selling them for Slaves, in some instances of whole families, and in others separating them one from another.

It is urged as a very great objection to the emancipation of blacks, their disposition to pilfering, but is not the worst of Robbery in depriving them of that most valuable Property, Liberty, and keeping them under the oppression of Slavery, the very cause of this fault? being pinched at times for almost every necessary of life, they naturally

naturally put forth a hand to partake of what their labour gives them some claim to in equity from their possessors, where due support is withheld; and these practices becoming habitual, in their impoverished condition, they discriminate not sufficiently between the property of those they labour for and others; but when opportunity presents frequently supply their wants from all alike, except where a principle of religious rectitude restrains from all such acts: I attempt not to palliate the crime. I have endeavoured what lies in my power to reprobate such proceedings, labouring to inculcate the Christian doctrine of returning good for evil, whereby they may know an overcoming evil with good; and to point out the necessity of departing from these practices, being objections speciously alledged against their general liberation: But as Slavery decreases and is exploded, we may reasonably hope its concomitant habits will also decrease, and a greater nobility of Soul take place. I believe the Almighty hath arisen to Judgment in this business, and that his voice will be found to exceed the sound of many Waters, or all the clamours of the People; overpowering all opposition whatsoever.

If we proved more faithful in the discharge of our duty towards God and this People, I believe they would act differently towards us—But where does Negro crimes exceed the Crimes of White Men? when we view them, selling tender Babes from a fond Mother, a beloved Wife from an affectionate Husband, or an aged Father from his offspring with whom he hath lived from their early years; and although a Slave, capable of the ties of affection and enjoying consolation in
their

their Society; and now, as to this life, forever parted—Ah! what language can paint in its genuine Colours this abominable practice? how rejoicing would it be to me, if with divine allowance, I might be placed in an allotment exempt from that continued grief of soul, which is almost daily renewed, from seeing and hearing of those acts of inhumanity committed by my countrymen! could I have believed myself authorized by the approbation, of Heaven, I should long 'ere this time have sought an asylum in some other Quarter—but I desire to be found in my proper allotment the little time I may be continued here—faithfully discharging my duty towards my Creator and my Country.

And now my fellow Citizens, let me call your serious attention to the present condition of our Land, you more especially who believe in a God, in the superintendence of his Providence, and in the Sacred Records: Let us ruminate on what is perpetrated within its borders; we who have been so highly favoured of the Almighty; and make so great profession respecting liberty to the World, I believe it can be proved, that since the Revolution, even within the small compass of the State of Delaware and its adjoining part of Maryland, there hath been more free blacks kidnapped and carried into Slavery, than there has been of American Citizens captured by the Algerines. Where are the feeling Parents, who suffered inexpressible grief on account of their darling Children stript from them in the late War? are not these in any degree brought to feel anothers woe?

Some advance that Negroes pay no regard to the natural ties of Husband and Wife, Parent
and

and Child—I know to the contrary; unnatural and hardened characters there are in all Nations, but that such abound more among this People than others, in proportion to their circumstances, I cannot admit. Where such instances have arisen, to whom must we apply the guilt? on the poor tried blacks, or on nominal professors of the blessed name of Christ? who with relentless tyranny can advertize amongst other stock on a farm, a number of these Brethren by Creation; and when the afflicted sufferers are called up for Sale, reluctantly advancing with tears falling from their Eyes—Oh blush Americans at this! perhaps a Trader in human flesh from Georgia, bids off a Mother and her Child, the Master of this dreadful Tragedy demanding more to be brought forward—An adventurer from Kentucky proves the highest bidder for the Father and another Child—Thus are Families torn asunder, the Marriage Tie violated and made of no account, and their Cup of human misery filled up with mingled bitters—And perhaps among the spectators, yea in other Lots sold, of these hapless victims to Avarice, even among the Speculators, may be found professed Ministers of the Gospel, who not only behold without reproof these proceedings, but are partakers of this gain of oppression.*—Is there

* Numerous are the instances that might be adduced to shew the inhuman cruelties inflicted on these helpless People, under the public countenance given to the Spirit of Oppression and Tyranny; a few cases may suffice to give the general features of those Enormities, of the certainty whereof I have no doubt of my Authority.

In the County of Kent on Delaware, a Negro man, not long since, having petitioned the Court for his freedom and security

there any spirited disapprobation manifested against this kind of Traffic where it prevails, is there not too generally a silent acquiescence therewith? and have I advanced ought but undeniable truths on the subject? not saying any thing of their hard fare in tyrannical families; though I acknowledge with satisfaction their condition is much meliorated in a general way within the last twenty Years, as to their domestic usage, yet, more distressing separations have taken place among them within that space of time than heretofore; Let us then my Countrymen put our Souls in their Souls stead, let us

security being required for his appearance in case he should be adjudged a Slave, his security took him home to his house to remain till Trial, the pretended Master or his agents went armed to the House when the Master of the Family was from home, violently seized the black man, much terrified the Family, carried him off, tied a Rope round his Neck, fastened it to a Horse, and drove so fast as to keep the poor black on a run, being thus dragged in such a manner, and so mangled and bruised that he died next Morning. No further notice appears to be taken of this brutality, by legal Authority, but the formality of a Warrant issued by the chief Justice.

Two Negro Men at Snow Hill Maryland, being charged with breaking into a Store, whereof on due examination they were found perfectly innocent, but previously in order to convict them, they were inhumanly and illegally tortured to make them confess, by the application of Thumb-screws, until their Thumbs burst with the pressure.—

A Negro Man charged with breaking into a Smoke house in Northampton County, Virginia, had his Feet put to the Fire to bake till they broiled into Blisters, to torture him into confession; but he was afterwards acquitted of the Fact by Confession of the Evidence which had been suborned against him.

Of like detestable Practices a Volume might be filled; but a more particular enumeration would not comport with the brevity intended in the present Representation.

imagine how it would feel, to be groaning under the Iron hand of oppression and no tribunal on Earth whereunto we might apply for relief.

It hath been infused into the minds of the People by the spirit of seduction, that I have persuaded the blacks to run from their Masters, that I gave them passes without discriminating between those who are free and others, whenever they apply; and that I keep a large number of absconded Slaves in clearing my Swamps; which was recently thrown before the Members of a Legislative Body, to counteract any influence I might possibly have there; together with an insinuation that I had offered a bribe to a connection of one then present, on a Negro affair; all which assertions I deny as originating from the Father of Lies; and made I believe to lay waste any possible influence I might have against Slavery.

Added to these things are the curses, threats and hard speeches, that have been thrown out against me, for acting only consonant with the principles of the late Revolution, in peaceably vindicating the natural Rights of Men, on the grounds of Humanity and obligations of the Christian Religion. And I think I may assert, that I never violated the Laws of Men in this business, unless feeding the hungry can be termed a violation; to some of those poor distressed People, when absconding as they have represented, on account of very rigorous treatment, I have indeed pitied and given them food, in which I considered myself warranted by the Law of God, and principle of human sympathy, to relieve for a little space a suffering fellow Creature, who called for assistance, hungry and weary.

But

But it is the reverse of my judgment of propriety, in preserving the peace of Society, to persuade these People from their Claimers service, and beneath the uprightness of my Profession to recommend any as free People who are not such. I believe a cause that is sanctioned by Omnipotence, needs no such effort to make it successful, but the more pure and upright are its espousers, the more will it be advanced. I am of the faith, the voice of the Spiritual Moses has been as intelligibly founded in the Ears of Americans, as ever the voice of Moses formerly was heard by the Egyptians, even the Lord from Heaven, who is a quickening Spirit and ‘ If they escaped not who refused him that spoke on Earth, ‘ how much more shall not we escape, if we ‘ turn away from him who speaketh from Heaven?’ who I believe is advancing to lay waste all opposition in this business; which he will effect in his own time. And it appears by a large part of the Wills latterly made, that many who retain their senses, are unwilling to risk a passage into an awful eternity and leave fellow Beings as Slaves; I marvel there are not many more.

I am troubled at seeing any run from their Masters, and generally counsel such, that it is my judgment they had better remain at home in quiet resignation as much as possible to their allotment, and that, if through a good conduct they should obtain favour of their Maker, he could change the hearts of these their possessors and induce them to liberate. On which ground of inward conviction it is, I wish to see the work carried forward. Some have taken my counsel and returned, others have judged best to pursue their

their own prospects be the event as it would; and some others, who by accounts met with hard treatment at home, I could say but little to on the subject, only as they were Slaves, it would not do for them to tarry at my house, as I could not by that means do them any good, and it would only give offence to their Claimers.

Is there a White Man among thousands, who if captured among the Algerines, would not embrace his liberty should opportunity present: If I were a humane Algerine residing in their Land, and an American in escaping from his Master ventured to call at my house, informing he had not eat any thing for several Days; would my Countrymen judge it criminal in me to feed him! what then should be the conduct of the higher professors of Christianity, in a similar case, towards a People, who differ from us by a few darker shades in the skin. Is there any part of our Religion that would authorize us to seize such and drag them again into Chains? or would it not be as great a violation of the righteous Law of God, who Scripture testifies is no respecter of Persons, but who hath created of one blood all nations of Men, to seize on one of a dark complexion as one of a fairer hue?---Is it not through the principles of tyranny and despotism yet too prevalent in America, in cherishing ideas of too much distinction among Men on this subject, that they are not only yet retained in Slavery, but even, when from a sense of religion and justice their Masters have dispensed to them

the

the blessing of liberty, they have not an equitable chance to vindicate their right, when it is encroached upon by kidnapping : For even where these acts are known in many Neighbourhoods, what a dastardly Spirit pervades the Minds of the People, lest they should offend some Neighbour, afraid to step forward in a prosecution, and if any are impelled to undertake it from this Sympathy with the sufferer, they are oft put to great difficulties for want of suitable evidence ; as those Whites who may have due knowledge of the matter, oft evade giving their Testimony through fear of making Enemies ; and thus in seeing the Thief, yet by silence consenting, according to Scripture, they become equally guilty ; and if there were thousands of blacks who could give clear evidence, the Law will not admit it as valid---Is not this arbitrary and very unjust ?

I dread the consequence of a continuance of wrong things in our Land, have we not seen evident tokens of divine displeasure ? hath not the Sword, the Famine, and Pestilence made their appearance in various parts ? and as a gentle rod shaking over us, are calling loudly to greater degrees of humility, repentance and amendment of life ; lest offended Omnipotence should pour forth upon us more abundantly the Vials of his Wrath, and tribulation, anguish and woe, be the complicated portion of the Inhabitants of America---Let us then by a strict attention to the discharge of our duty towards God and Man so act as to invite the Lords' blessings upon us, who is ever ready
to

to shower down his favours on the Obedient workmanship of his hands----Which that it may be our happy experience, is the desire and prayer of a Lover of his Country and Countrymen, a peaceable Subject to its Laws, and an Universal friend to Mankind.

WARNER MIFFLIN.

Kent, on Delaware
11 Month 1796.